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## Supplement

Well-known South Viet Nam military commentator Cuu Long on "South Viet Nam politico-military situation in 1968"

# One Year of General Offensives and Simultaneous Uprisings



PLAF fighters in Hue City

## FROM TET OFFENSIVES TO PARIS CONFERENCE

**I**N November 1967, Johnson organized Westmoreland's triumphant visit to Washington and a joint session of Congress to hear the U.S.-U.S. puppet forces in Viet Nam testify that victory had already appeared on the horizon, that "there was a fight at the end of the tunnel" and that it was even possible to bring home a first batch of GIs by the end of 1968.

Less than three months later, the powerful general offensives and simultaneous uprisings broke out in South Viet Nam, carrying the war even into cities said to be "impregnably defended" by the aggressors, and "many Americans had been hoodwinked." (Newsweek, Feb 25, 1968.)

The feats accomplished by the South Vietnamese people and their armed forces in the early days of last Lunar Year made a great impression on world opinion, especially American opinion. Wall Street Journal, an organ of U.S. big monopoly, in its Jan. 31, 1968 issue termed them as "the most impressive, most flagrant and best co-ordinated communist assault of the entire war."

Everyone knows the catastrophic impact of this first wave of offensives and risings upon the U.S.-puppets:

Militarily, let us mention one-third of the Saigon Army wiped out or disbanded, one-fifth of U.S. manpower destroyed or put out of action, one-third of the aircraft, aircraft and armoured vehicles and an important part of

its war material destroyed. American propaganda did its best to conceal these considerable losses from the public and was rebuked by many Western newspapers. U.S. officers in Saigon in private admitted them in all candour.

The blow was particularly devastating for the aggressors and their lackeys for the political plane. An immense number were immediately freed from their yoke, shattering their "WHIAM" (win hearts and minds) programme and paving the way for the ignominious departure of the ill-famed Mr. Komer, the programmes' administrator. What little authority the Saigon administration still enjoyed with the people in cities

(Continued page 4)

in  
South  
Viet  
Nam

\* **SAIGON FRONT:** 7 enemy companies destroyed or decimated, 12 planes and helicopters brought down, 68 military vehicles wrecked and 7 vessels sunk or damaged.

\* **NEAR CAN THO:** 2 attacks against an airfield within 10 days, 75 planes and helicopters destroyed and 200 U.S.-puppet troops killed or wounded.

\* **IN THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS:** nearly 800 adverse casualties in the first half of January.

\* **HEAVY ENEMY LOSSES IN 2 "ACCELERATED PACIFICATION" OPERATIONS:** 2,000 men put out of action and more than 30 vessels sunk or damaged.



# Exciting Hours, Somewhere Around Da Nang

A year ago, general offensives and simultaneous uprisings broke out all over South Viet Nam. On the occasion of this anniversary, we publish some "snapshots" of events happening somewhere in the countryside around Da Nang on the night of January 30 1968 and the following morning. They were taken from a literary review published in the liberated area of Central Trung Bo. Ed.

It was late afternoon. An unusual bustle was stirring the whole village. Not because it was the eve of Tet, the traditional Lunar New Year's Day. Preparations had been going on for the festival, but this afternoon nobody had a thought for it.

Something much more important had been announced for the night: the opportunity had occurred for the people to avenge their hatred of the enemy, for so long pent up. Everywhere, people got ready for the forthcoming battle. First of all, they feverishly arm themselves with all kinds of weapons, even the most rudimentary ones, mostly ropes and sticks. All kinds of ropes, coir ropes, paraffined cords, wire strings, discarded electrical flexes. All kinds of sticks: bamboo spears, wooden stakes, rammers retrieved from burned-down houses, etc. And of course cold steel: machetes, sabres, taken out of caches and refurbished, and kitchen knives of all sizes.

A final check-up by the local committee of the NFL was taking place. Everything was in tip-top shape. Megaphones, first-aid kits, stretchers... nothing had been forgotten. The most careful preparations had been made for a victory, for success. The hardest sacrifices were faced with calm and resolve.

The march-off signal was given. "Forward! Victory shall be ours!" In good order and perfect silence, the column moved forward...

**M**IDNIGHT. Liberation troops had crossed the river and were heading for Da Nang. Some of the assault units must have already taken up their positions, ready to storm the HQ of the puppet First Army Corps.

In a base area, people were waiting. Suddenly, the sky came aglow above the city itself and thunderous explosions were heard.

"That's it!" all exclaimed at once. It was 2.30 in the morning.

Pounding flashes continued to streak the sky, and the explosions became an uninterrupted rumble. On the ground, big fires flared up. Each was immediately lo-

gaping mouths and would let the people resume their march without interfering.

It was a glorious morning. Not a plane in the sky, not a jet, not a helicopter, not a tank. For the first time in many years, land and sky were ours. It was reported that large numbers of planes had been destroyed at the Da Nang and Nuoc Man airfields, that the Hoai An provincial command and Vinh Duy district command had been stormed and the administrative HQ of Duy Xuyen district razed to the ground. Besieged and assaulted in their various lairs, the aggressors and puppets were signalling for help and calling each other names over their radios...

"Look, where should we bring all this rice?" a peasant delegation yelled at them. "Hey, what about this buffalo, this ox and these pigs?" another would ask. "You don't see to care about our glutinous rice and poultry?" a group of women gently chid the harassed commissioners.

*This is the Voice of Viet Nam... This is Radio Liberation...*

**D**AWN broke. Preceded by a gigantic NFL banner, the "political army" now joined battle. The news, which spread like wildfire, everyone jumped for joy. Those who had been to Hué or Saigon drew hasty sketch-maps of those cities and proudly pointed to their fellow-villagers the various points under the Liberation troops' fire.

In an underground shelter, a mimeograph machine was operating at full speed, turning out news bulletins of the latest developments of orders. In vain did mothers, elder sisters, and even revolutionary cadres try to talk them out of it: the kids stuck to their decision. Here's the proof, they argued, always showing themselves worthy of their elders? Hadn't they participated in many political actions? Look, they were ready to give a hand to their mothers and elder sisters in hunting down and tying up enemy agents... Finally before their insistence, the elder generation had to give way!

A final check-up by the high committee. Everything was in tip-top shape. Megaphones, first-aid kits, stretchers... nothing had been forgotten. The most careful preparations had been made for a victory, for success. The hardest sacrifices were faced with calm and resolve.

Like a cornered beast, the enemy struggled desperately.

But the sword of the people's war was sharp, and his blow that never, never would he recover his legs.

"Fighters' mothers" buried themselves preparing meals and refreshments which they brought or sent to their adopted sons, the Liberation troops' rice cakes, chicken, dried meat, etc., the choicest delicacies they could find. But the busiest of all were the supply cadres. Not because supplies were short, far from it; they worked in such quantities that they were at a loss how to handle them.

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**V**ILLAGE lanes were crowded with people in the hills and mountains. Yet there was no slack in vigilance. The slightest drone in the air and everyone disappeared into the shelters. Indeed, the enemy had begun to run. A chopper hovered overhead. Gunfire shattered from the ground. The helicopter reeled and belched smoke. A young boy, a liaison agent going about his job, stopped, aimed his automatic rifle and fired a burst, which paid to the machine. Soon after it crashed to the ground a swarm of planes arrived, but ground fire was so thick and deadly that they hastily turned tail after dropping their bombs at random.

Like a cornered beast, the enemy struggled desperately. But the sword of the people's war was sharp, and his blow that never, never would he recover his legs.

**E**ditor's Note: We reprint below a report by Carl Strock, who spent a year and a half with the "American Friends' Service Committee" in South Viet Nam. He who writes there, the Tet concentrated offensives and simultaneous uprisings. The report first appeared in Liberation, an American paper, in its September 1968 issue.

**B**EFORE I went to Viet Nam I was asked of the destructive competence of the U.S. military. I was opposed to American intervention in Viet Nam because its purpose was to suppress a popular revolution, but there was no doubt in my mind that such suppression was possible... After spending the last year and a half in Viet Nam I feel differently. First, it became apparent that the American military was not really winning the war. There was a stalemate, as sections of the press would still have us believe... Since the Tet offensive, the situation has been through a sharper focus. Now many believe that the war, from the stand point of the United States, may be in the process of lost. I would like to argue a case just one step more advanced: The war is already lost; Viet Nam is won.

How is it possible to say, with well over a million "allied" troops still in the country and with jet bombers still flying overhead and arms the people, that Viet Nam has won? As in any war, the definition of victory or defeat depends on the objectives of each side. In the case of Viet Nam, in simplest terms, the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the National Liberation Front are fighting to expand their reign of terror and supporting their armed representatives. After the failure of strategic hamlets and special warfare, the U.S. has shifted to a new strategy which it still clings to—the occupation of small enclaves and the

invaders have left... The porters and 2) occupy territories and maintain control of the population. Let us now look at what has happened in terms of those objectives.

First, it will be readily seen that the NFL depends on the support of the people in order to wage the war. The political half of the war was never really open to dispute—deep-seated patriotism set the people against the American occupiers before the latter even got started... Conversely, the United States has had to wage war against the people to prevent the Americans from occupying and supporting their armed representatives. After the failure of strategic hamlets and special warfare, the U.S. has shifted to a new strategy which it still clings to—the occupation of small enclaves and the

invaders have left... The porters and 2) occupy territories and maintain control of the population. Let us now look at what has happened in terms of those objectives.

The Americans have been more successful, however, in two other respects. They have been able to kill large numbers of non-combatants, especially densely populated areas, and they have terrorized many people and forced them into camps (so-called "refugee centers"). But in terms of U.S. objectives both these successes have backfired. The slaughter of civilians has made the survivors more militarily resolute and determined to defend their homes. The U.S. has done so right in the rear areas, the densely populated cities. The "no-quarter" situation has both failed and succeeded for major battles. All the above has been true ever since the war reached large proportions in 1965. The U.S. has always had the upper hand, enjoying the support of the people and exercising effective administration over most of the country.

Since the Tet offensive

these tendencies already present, have sharply increased further in the same direction, but to such an extent as to introduce a new qualitative element in the war. Just think. A few years ago, it used to be a sensational news if a "Vietcong terrorist" penetrated Saigon and threw a grenade into a military office. Today, however, one worries about individual attackers. Liberation troops are stationed inside Saigon and major battles occur in the city. It is not for nothing that when an aircraft was downed while prowling above the remote jungle, this year four American pilots shot down right over Saigon. Last year I could, with some risk, travel over much of South Viet Nam by land, but today the size of the question, and even higher, is increasing through the Mekong Delta, is the scene of constant ambushes and mining of bridges. And the development of even greater consequence to American military fortunes, is the tremendous loss of materiel suffered since Tet. American pilots privately admitted that at least a thousand aircraft were lost during the Tet offensive, and many more have been destroyed since then...

Regardless of official attitudes, General Giap's "enclave theory," that notion actually in effect: U.S. and Saigon troops have been largely pulled back to the rear areas, where they are under continuous attack by the People's Liberation Armed Forces (PLAF). Many Americans, including the NFL, fighting in the cities, especially Saigon; the answer is really quite simple: That is all that is left. The light for the war in the countryside is over; the NFL has won.

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## VIET NAM HAS WON THE WAR

### From Tet Offensives to Paris Conference

(Continued from page 1)

tightly controlled by them, went up in flames. And it is at the aggressors' hopes for the consolidation of an indigenous government that could serve as a screen for their neo-colonialist designs. As bitterly Henry Kissinger, the new U.S. President's advisor on national security matters: "One result of the Tet offensive is to delay the negotiations indefinitely—the consolidation of governmental authority" (See Foreign Affairs, January 1969).

Everywhere, the people rose up, organized themselves and built up revolutionary power. It was this struggle among the National, Democratic and Peace Forces emerged as the symbol of the widening of the national front of struggle against U.S. aggression.

A new page was turned in South Viet Nam's history: the "limited war" unleashed by the Yankees was defeated at the very moment when their war efforts had probably reached a peak, and the total number of troops in the American Expeditionary Corps was about to hit a ceiling politically acceptable to the American people. The aggressors

were thus compelled to scrap their "peripheral" strategy which also consisted of big-scale counter-offensives, and instead concentrated on the protection of important bases and densely populated areas. Their aggressive will having been checked, they shifted to a new strategy of "attrition" and concentrated on the protection of important bases and densely populated areas.

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That is what lay behind President Johnson's March 31, 1968 speech and the launching of the bombing of the DRVN. That is also what lay behind the dilatory moves by the Americans in their so-called "negotiations". The month was suspended by them before giving their agreement to the site of DRVN—USA talks, a month to allow the aggressors to talk, to manoeuvre, to bring in their delegations, to recognize the unconditional cessation of U.S. aggression.

The major battle was fought in South Viet Nam in May, then in August—September 1968, cost the U.S. puppets nearly 200,000 casualties. The destruction of thousands of aircraft, armoured vehicles and a considerable quantity of war materials. Abrams' new strategy of "attrition" and hold to attrition proved to be powerless in face of the stormy assaults launched by the PLAF against big cities and important U.S. bases where a plan for "destruction in depth" had been elaborated. Entire enemy bat-

talions were wiped out in the heart of Saigon, the last of fortifications taken by the NLF burst open, and many enemy lairs were pounded by people's artillery by day and by night. Politically, each wave of offensives has been followed by a journalist put it—a bit of the "butcher power". The revolution's effectiveness now prevails in Saigon and other South Vietnamese cities, such slogan as "End US aggression!", "Down with the fire-eating Thieu-Ky-Huong clique!", "Form a peace mass movement", etc., are in circulation, and the complete isolation of the aggressors and their henchmen.

And most recently, the first half of January 1969 which witnessed a continuation of the offensives started a year ago, was characterized by PLAF attacks on all battle-fields and on enemy key positions, as well as by numerous guerrilla activities which forced the U.S.-puppets to give up.

They only learn from their setbacks. The ones sustained in 1968 already brought the Johnson Administration to its senses and to a series of backing-down moves.

May the coming events of 1969 which will surely be marked by the sweeping process of offensives and uprisings staged by South Viet Nam's forces—drive home to the Nixon administration the advisability of the only reasonable course of action—to put an end to U.S. aggression against Viet Nam.



PLAF scouts in Ba Den mountain region (Tay Ninh province)



# ON THE LARGE SOUTHERN FRONT

## MILITARY OPERATIONS

### Enemy Under Attack from All Sides Across South Viet Nam

**T**HE PLAF continued its attacks on the enemy without let-up in the whole territory and in multiple forms: storms, assaults against camps, positions and base camps, intensive shelling of carefully selected targets, ambuses on roads and river convoys, bold and effective果敢的 attacks by groups of guerrillas in the rural areas or self-defence groups in the cities even in Saigon. The patriotic actions were particularly intense on the **saigon front and in the Mekong Deltas**. Following are the main ones:

In the province of **Tay Ninh**, on the night of Jan. 10, in the provincial capital 87 km Northwest of Saigon and in several other locations, attacks followed by popular uprisings cost the enemy 150 men killed or wounded. Next day, in sinking a patrol boat and a supply truck on the **Oriental Van Co** river, the regional forces of the province wiped out about one hundred adverse troops. On Jan. 13, other vehicles were sunk on the same river at **Ben Dinh**, 70 km Northwest of Saigon.

On the following day, 3 ambuses were laid by the PLAF in the vicinity of **Dat Set** (10 km East-Southeast of Tay Ninh) against 3 road convoys. Two military vehicles were destroyed and more than a GI's hundred knocked out.

On Jan. 15, 11 other vehicles were destroyed during an attack on the encampment of a mechanized infantry unit at **Bau Co**, 18 km Northeast of Tay Ninh.

On the same day, near **Ban Soi**, about 15 km West-Southwest of Tay Ninh, 2 passenger vehicles were wiped out, suffering two casualties and the loss of a large quantity of arms and materials, 5 staff cars, 17 civilian and armoured cars, shot down 3 helicopters and 120 GI's were destroyed. Next morning, the relief forces were intercepted and a third company was put out of action.

In the province of **Binh Long**, about 100 km North of Saigon, in an ambush on **Sai Gon** on Jan. 12, the PLAF wiped out 17 armoured cars, shot down 3 helicopters and 120 GI's were killed or wounded.

Further Northwest, in the province of **Phuoc Long**, an attack was reported by *Giai Phong* Press Agency against a position of the "First Air Cavalry Division" at **Ngo** (8 km South of Phuoc Long provincial capital) on Jan. 10. 2 U.S. companies were wiped

out, 1 helicopter shot down and 2 heavy mortars destroyed. This was the 2nd disaster of the "Flying Tigers" in the area where, on Jan. 1, 2 other companies (not one reported earlier) were put out of action.

Western news agencies further reported the attacks mounted between Jan. 17 and Jan. 21 in the sector of the Saigon from especially in Phuoc Loc, Tay Ninh, Vinh Tan and Saigon. In broad daylight, the airfield and the military port of **Vung Tau**, a big U.S. aero-naval base, situated 10 km South of Saigon, were subjected to 2 bombings on Jan. 21 causing serious injuries (including 1 man) and material (including 1 aircraft, 1 landing craft, 1 supply vessel, 1000 m<sup>2</sup> of fuel, 6 cannons and heavy mortars, grounded to choppers and planes and burnt nearly 2 million litres of fuel).

West of **Pietzu**, Highway No 19 was cut at several points on Jan. 14 and 350 sections of pipelines destroyed. Next day, in intercepting the enemy moving in on a repair mission in U.S. naval base were destroyed and planes and 5 tanks.

Western news agencies reported other actions in this area in the 3 days ending Jan. 21: bombardment of the U.S. **A Khe** base (235 km Southwest of Saigon) and a position of the U.S. 173 Airborne Brigade located (190 km Southwest of Saigon); after 3 hours of lighting, the PLAF won control of the terrain on Jan. 13 and proceeded with the systematic destruction of enemy aircraft, tanks, armoured cars and grenades. A combatant was credited with destroying 12 and another, 8. Ten days earlier, this same airfield had already suffered under two rounds of big fire pumped by the patriots who inflicted great damage to it. All told, during these 2 raids against the U.S. base, 1000 men were killed or wounded, mostly helicopters, or three-quarters of the total number of aircraft stationed at the airfield, 11 armoured cars, 1000 m<sup>2</sup> of land capable of equipping a complete army battalion, 1000 tonnes of burnt and 200 men, mostly GI's.

Closer to Saigon, in the province of **My Tho**, the enemy was hard hit in the provincial capital and in almost all important urban centres and military bases. Between Jan. 10 and Jan. 15, and took 2000 casualties, including 430 GI's, killed or wounded.

On the night of Jan. 18 another wave of attacks flared up again in this province only some 40 km from Saigon.

In the Southernmost peninsula, the large-scale pacification operation conducted by

6,000 U.S.-puppet troops (15 battalions) from Dec. 22, 1968 to Jan. 6, 1969 in 20 villages in the **U Minh** area ended with heavy losses: 1,000 of the raiders were put out of action (including 200 GI's), 32 vessels sunk on burnt and 32 helicopters downed.

In the province of **Binh Thanh**, the **Giai Phong** district inflicted 300 casualties on the adversary including 200 GI's and brought down 4 helicopters in the first 10 days of January.

Heavy mortaring was reported by Western news agencies against positions between Jan. 17 and Jan. 23, particularly against the U.S. **Binh Duc** base, near My Tho, and the military sector HQ's installed in the provincial capitals of **Cao Mao**, My Tho, Tay Thanh, Hoc Mon, Chau Doc and Go Cong.

In the **Western Highlands**, in the first half of January, the patriots fought at least 45 combats, put 780 enemy troops (270 GI's) out of action, destroyed 36 vehicles including 14 armoured cars, 6 cannons and heavy mortars, grounded to choppers and planes and burnt nearly 2 million litres of fuel.

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On the other hand, Western news agencies reported: 2 bombings on Jan. 22 of the air base and military port of **Da Nang** which resulted in a PLAF heavy engagement with marines in the Dai Loc area and the shelling on Jan. 17 of 2 enemy positions in the province of **Binh Dinh** at the 14th parallel.

A remarkable exploit of the guerrillas of **Quang Ngai** province (some 100 km Southeast of Da Nang) was recently reported by *Giai Phong* Press Agency: between Dec. 27, 1968 and Jan. 6, 1969 they downed 20 and damaged 3 enemy helicopters and planes. Those of village Ninh 2 days grounded 5 aircraft and a village militia leader

was credited with the downing of 2 helicopters and 1 jet and damaging 2 other helicopters.

In South Viet Nam's northernmost provinces of **Con Tien** and **Tan Lam** (Rockpile) areas, 150 enemy casualties among them 115 GI's were listed between Jan. 1 and Jan. 14.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Saigon Intellectuals Publish Manifesto

MANY Saigon intellectuals have recently made public a manifesto urging "an immediate political solution for peace" in South Viet Nam, *Giai Phong* Press Agency reported. Its signatories were Tran Ngoc Lieng, a barrister; Ly Chanh Trung, Chau Lam Luan and Tran Kim Thach, professors; Nguyen Huu Thien, architect; and Phan Van My, a businessman.

The manifesto, issued at a time when the mass movement for peace was sweeping South Vietnamese towns, underscored that South Viet Nam must adopt a political line "based on independence, democracy and freedom".

### Buddhists Stage Peace Prayers

ON January 6, numbers of Buddhist female believers held at An Quang pagoda (Saigon) a religious service, in the memory of a man who had burnt himself to death in protest to the U.S.-puppet dictatorial regime.

The participants in the ceremony passed a petition urging that the Paris peace talks should be held in good faith in order to put an end to the war and restore peace.

### GIs Protest en masse U.S. war in South Viet Nam

— 3,000 GI's supported by 1,000 Vietnamese workers and hands at Dong Du demand repatriation.

— 2 American divisions at Binh Duc refuse an "accelerated pacification" operation.

ON December 27, 1968, at 1 p.m., 3,000 American soldiers and officers at Dong Du base near Cu Chi (50 km northwest of Saigon) displayed streamers and posters demanding an end to the U.S. Viet Nam war and repatriation, *Giai Phong* Press Agency reported. The demonstration lasted the whole afternoon despite intercession by "security" officers and spread to all sectors in the base.

As a token of solidarity 1,000 Vietnamese workers and hands working at the base downed tools to back the GI's claims.

On December 28, the demonstrators continued to hold meetings all day long. NFL leaflets were passed from hand to hand and even read aloud. The workers' strike went on until December 30.

Another report of the same agency said that on December 29, American servicemen of Battalion 1 and 2, U.S. Infantry Division 9 at Binh Duc, near My Tho, left bank of the Mekong river, refused an "accelerated pacification" operation. The enemy military police opened tear gas grenades at the masses, which killed 150 GI's to them, tear their uniforms and uniforms and break their ranks. The following day, the U.S. command had to move off immediately one of the battalions.